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PREACHED BY

HENRY WARD BEECHER.



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Brooklyn, January, 1869.

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HENRY WARD BEECHER.

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## “AS A LITTLE CHILD.”

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During the few weeks that I have been here, and have had the services of the Sabbath mornings under my charge, I have felt that both courtesy and good feeling required that, as far as possible, I should avoid all discussion and exposition that would raise questions of difference. Divided as the great Christian world is in various ways, internally and externally, into separate bands, it seems to me that the same courtesy should be employed when one stands in a promiscuous multitude in the community that is employed in the intercourse between families. In every neighborhood there are certain elements that are different in one family and another; and politeness requires that they should not interfere with each other's living. Every one is entitled to his own liberty; and there is a propriety in every other one respecting that liberty. I have undertaken, therefore, on the Sabbath mornings when I have spoken to you, to discuss those elements which were spiritually fundamental, and which belonged to all Christian sects in common—and I shall this morning do the same thing: for when you touch the question of true Christian experience; when you deal with the great subject of Christian character, all differences vanish. It will be found as you recede from the spiritual conception of manhood to the instruments by which men are educated that differences multiply and disputes increase; but as you go from the visible toward the invisible, and discuss the interior life of Christians, all differences gradually cease, and men come into perfect unity. If you could bring the whole great diverse brotherhood of Christians,

under various names, together into a scene where all were lifted up to a holy enthusiasm in admiration for some great and noble deed, or in aspiration, you would find that they would take hold of hands together, and that there would be no separation. The essential element of Christianity *unites* men. Its instruments and external institutions *divide* them. Therefore he who speaks from the interior, and to the interior of Christian experience, speaks in accordance with the best judgments and the best aspirations of Christians of every sect.

In the 18th chapter of Matthew, and the opening verse, are the following words :

"At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven ?

That is very much, if you should put it in modern phrase, as if one should say, "What do you consider the most eminent state of Christian experience ? What is your conception of the most perfect manhood ?"

"And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."

Let alone who is the greatest there ;—you shall not even get in unless you become as little children.

"Whosoever, therefore, shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven."

We are to recollect that our Master stood at a time of the world when in various nations the ambition of manhood had been, or was, very strong. The Chaldean and the Assyrian had their conception of what was the most becoming in a man—they had their ideal heroes, in other words ; the Greek had his ideal man and manhood ; the Roman had very distinctly before his mind that which to him was the highest spectacle of manhood ; the Jews, who were not one whit behind them, had clear conceptions of what was necessary to a perfect noble manhood ; and our Master fell in with the universal disposition of men in their better moods, or of the best men in their better moods, to seek ideal perfection ; and when they came to ask him, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven ?"—that is, "What is the highest man-

hood?"—he took a little child and set him in their midst. And what was the signification of that?

The Master was surrounded by conceited men, whose ideal was so easily reached that there were tens of thousands in Jerusalem who had reached it, and who had gone, as they thought, as far as human nature could go ; and perchance they were of those who said, "What lack I yet?" That was the spirit of the great mass of the best Jews. Their standard being so low, there were many elements that puffed them up ; they felt that they knew a great deal ; they had read the Old Testament—that is, the law of Moses, the prophets and the Psalms ; their teachers had inspired them with the feeling that knowledge consisted in a minute rendering and an exact understanding of the distinctions of the exterior Mosaic law ; they were very familiar with that ; they therefore felt that there was scarcely anybody that could instruct them ; and they were very proud and excessively conceited. Our Master stood in the midst of scribes, doctors, teachers, and eminent Jewish saints ; and their feeling was, "We are ready to patronize you ; we recognize that you are an able man, that you are a prophet, that you are one of us ; and we will take you into our company if you will only disclose an *esprit de corps*. If you will go with us we will accept you." In their conceit they felt that they were orthodox, that they were saints ; and Christ says to them, "If you wish to be eminent in the kingdom of heaven you must be converted—that is, you must be turned to just what you are not ; you must empty yourselves all out of yourselves, and start over again ; and you must be like little children."

Now, what is it in childhood that makes the model or conception of manhood? It is not that the child loves ; it is not that the child is weak ; it is not that the child is ignorant : it is that in childhood universally there is the impetus and aptitude to *learn*. It is not a sense of ignorance so much as an appetite for knowledge ; and the whole force of the nature of the child, the whole impulse of the child's mind, is, "What is that? What is that? What is that?" and the child sits artlessly and receives what every one tells it. It is hungry for knowledge, and knowledge pours into it in

ceaseless streams. But the Pharisees felt themselves to be like a bay into which the whole Atlantic ocean pours its tides, and fills it full, so that no more can be put into it without its running over ; and the Saviour said to them, " There is no man among you that knows anything about the kingdom of God. Such is your self-satisfied state that unless you be converted and become as children, unless you are conscious that you are profoundly ignorant, unless you have a different conception of what manhood means, and of the ways of obtaining it, and unless you become my scholars, and let me teach you the first elements of noble living, you shall not see the kingdom of heaven."

What, then, is "the kingdom of heaven" ? It is an oriental figure ; and it is a figure which is better understood in a monarchy, and under a despotism, than in our democratic republican government. We have to form very artificial notions of it. But we are familiar with what is meant by a *cause*—the cause of temperance, the cause of virtue, the cause of truth ; we are familiar with what is meant by purity and justice, and so on ; and our knowledge of these things will help us somewhat to understand what our Master meant by "the kingdom of heaven."

The exact definition is given by the Apostle Paul, where he says, " The kingdom of God is not meat and drink [referring to the sacrificial rites and feasts of the Jews], but righteousness, [right-living, rectitude of life, in intent and endeavor], and peace [not blindness nor stupidity]. " *Peace* does not mean the absence of disturbance. Peace is a positive quality. It is the highest condition in which correlated faculties can exist. It is intense tranquility. When the strongest feelings are in accord and all right, the highest excitement is the most peaceful state. All excitements that are painful or injurious are so because men are not perfect enough ; because they are not high enough ; because they do not average enough.

When you hear one of the noblest strains of Beethoven's symphonies, in ten or twelve different parts, it seems like one sound. Take those parts from each other, separate them, throw them against each other, and they agitate one another ;

but when they are perfectly concordant all the instruments swell together with their different natures. They are so related that their varying sounds become as one sound, and are completely harmonious.

When one feeling alone is excited, its excitement is disturbing, and the other feelings are in conflict ; but when the whole mind is excited together, and concordantly, there is no disturbance, but all is peace. And that peace which is here meant is a peace of vitality : it is not a peace of stupidity or indifference. It is one of the noblest, highest, best and most comprehensive of feelings.

Then there is another element which the apostle mentions as belonging to the kingdom of heaven—namely, “joy in the Holy Ghost”—that is, inspired joy ; that rapture which comes not from a sordid love of things which we can see or handle, but from the experience of those nobler hours, those supreme moments which are given to men ; that ecstasy which comes from conscious communion, or from the unconscious possession of the highest feelings of our nature.

When, therefore, you put these elements together, and bring them into order, and weigh them, and interpret them in our familiar manner, the kingdom of God is simply the Realization of Manhood in the highest form. It begins on earth and terminates in heaven. He only is in the kingdom of God who has begun to develop in himself, with earnest purpose, all those qualities, that whole line of conduct, which is leading him toward the full idea of perfect manhood which God meant when he set up man.

Take a clock like that one in the office here, that never keeps time. What was it made for ? To keep time. That was the design with which it was put together and set a-going. It may wander from the original purpose of its maker, and go too fast or too slow ; nevertheless, that for which it was made was to register the lapse of time. That was the end which was contemplated in its construction. All clocks are made for that. It is what the man set out for who made it. He may have thought of selling it, and getting the money for it ; but the constructive idea back of the commercial one was that it should register time. That is

the root of the matter in every clock ; and the clock is valuable in proportion as it does this, and worthless in proportion as it wanders from its maker's design.

Now, in the matter of manhood, the plenitude of reason, the fullness, richness, depth and power of the moral sentiments ; the illumination that comes through the imagination ; all those illusive graces that flash over the mind through fancy and mirth and humor ; all those domestic affections which go where the mother-nature may not go in society relations ; all those basilar forces which are indispensable to man in his warfare in the material world—all these elements (and how many there are of them ! How easily they are put out of adjustment ! How poorly they are constructed ! How much they lack that training which shall lead them to work upward and in the right direction !)—all these elements constitute the conception of man, in full disclosure, with all his powers of mind and soul and spirit developed so that the whole being is one that obeys the laws of matter, social laws, intellectual laws, moral laws and spiritual laws.

Next, what is it to "*enter into the kingdom of God*" ? In the first place, you want to throw away the idea of a city, of a gate, or of any material entering-in. Whoever undertakes to be a man according to the instruction of the word of God, though his ideal may not be complete, and undertakes to use himself so as to make himself better, and so as to grow more and more manly, has entered the kingdom of God.

Entering the kingdom of God, then, is entering a Christian, a higher and nobler, life. Entering the kingdom of God is being better. Meaning to be better systematically, as the end of one's life, is to enter the kingdom of God.

And what is being "*converted*" ? It is *beginning* to do these things. What is it to be a farmer ? Well, it is to obtain one's livelihood, or rather occupying one's time, in the cultivation of the soil. What is it to become converted from a minister to a farmer ? It is to stop preaching much, and to go to work on a farm. It does not necessarily mean that I shall be a good farmer, or that I shall earn anything, or that I shall do my work in the best way, but that I shall de-

vote my time to the business of farming. The moment I begin to devote myself to that business I begin to be a farmer.

What is it for a man who has been a liar all his life long to become a man of veracity? It is to set out with the purpose of fulfilling, as far as possible, the law of truth. It is hard for a man who has been living in an illusory world to get back into a world of realities; and it is hard for a man who has equivocated from his childhood up to speak the truth. No man speaks the truth easily who has not been trying to all his life, and still less one who has all his life indulged in falsehood. But when a man says, "I have been a liar; I see that lying is dishonorable and base; and I am going to try to be a man of truth," and makes a business of it for days and weeks and months, and means to keep on, he has begun to be a truthful man. He may yet falsify every day; but if, after all, he has his face set toward veracity, and toward overcoming the tendency to falsehood, and is growing in the belief of his neighbors, then he has begun to enter the kingdom of truth; he is a part of it; he is a disciple in it.

A man is taken sick. The physician says that morbific influences have a course that they must run; that when they have once started there is a tendency to keep on; and he will also tell you that by and by there comes a point where, under medication, or by the forces of nature, this tendency is exhausted, where it consummates itself, and where there begins to be a recuperative tendency. This man has been three weeks confined to his bed, and his physician says "The crisis is past; now there is a tendency to recovery." The man is "getting well"; he is "convalescent." But he is not well; his eyes are heavy; his bones ache; his organs do not perform their functions perfectly; he is on the "sick list" yet; it will be a long time before he will be on his feet; and when he is on his feet it will be a long time before he can make much use of himself; and after he commences to use himself it will be perhaps six months before he will be restored to full vigor and usefulness; and yet when the physician says, "The crisis is past," the man has begun to get well.

Now, to be converted means to set your face toward a

higher and nobler way of living—not to set yourself to do better according to the pattern of this neighborhood or according to the average public sentiment of the community; but to set yourself to do better according to the pattern of the highest manhood. The moment a man takes in a conception of his relations to God, of his eternal existence, of the change spiritual by which, by and by, he is to drop this mortal body and be associated with the general assembly and church of the first-born, and with the spirits of just men made perfect, in the other life; the moment a man comprehends the scope of his whole being here and hereafter, and says, "I am determined to live as a man should who has such a destiny in the life to come"—that moment he has entered into the kingdom of God.

We are stopped at this point by misconceptions widespread. In the first place, men say, "I understand by conversion a great change wrought in a man by which he passes from death to life, so that whereas yesterday he was a great sinner, to-day he is a child of grace; so that a man who is in the darkness of ignorance is immediately lifted into the light of truth, wherein everything becomes new to him." This impression is the more mischievous because it has a root of truth in it, a figurative expression being treated as though it were literal truth.

A man gets up in a conference meeting, a love-feast, or some church assembly, and says, "I was conscious that there was a great struggle in me against God and righteousness; and I was conscious of being suddenly led by the power of God so that everything seemed new to me. I never heard the birds sing so before. The world never seemed so beautiful to me before. I never before seemed to love everybody so. Everything appeared different. I was a new man. I was changed—completely changed." He really does feel as though he was completely changed. Well, is he? Let us see. He has been a stingy man. Is his stinginess quite dead? He has been a very proud man. The first effect of this spiritual shock that he has received was such that his head is not held so high, and his neck is a great deal more limber; but is his pride dead? You shall soon after hear

him say, "We have our trials and troubles in the Christian life as elsewhere. I have had much light and comfort since I became a Christian ; but I have had my ups and downs." What does he mean by "ups and downs"? He means that he was not completely changed by the Spirit of God. He *began* to be a Christian—that was the only change which he underwent. He simply started in the Christian course. His old habits were not burned up. There was a change ; and pride, love of money, vanity, the affections, all the faculties of the mind, received an impulse in the right direction ; but that impulse had not consolidated itself into fixed habits ; and every man that is born into the kingdom of God, or converted, is merely started in the Christian life.

A man says, "I am going to emigrate. This is a poor country about the White Mountains ; a man must be a stone to be contented to earn his living on these farms ; I am going to Oregon, where the land is worth having ;" but he cannot sell his farm ; and he must look after his old mother, who cannot go ; and he is hindered in various ways from carrying out his intention. He thinks about it much as many people think about becoming Christians. They want to be Christians ; they never see any exhibition of Christian life, or witness any religious ceremony, that it does not stir them up and make them wish they were Christians ; they feel that they must be Christians some time or other. By and by the mother dies, and the man says, "One string is broken that kept me here: now, if I can get rid of my farm, I will go." But there are vacillations in his mind. He says, "Can I get enough money to go with?" By and by he begins to read and think and inform himself. At length he sells his farm, and he has, perhaps, a thousand dollars ; and he says, "What can I do with it?" He says at last, turning it over seriously in his mind, "I will go—I will go next Monday." Next Monday comes, and he starts. After traveling a day, he gets to Boston. An acquaintance meets him there, and says, "Hallo ! I understood you were going to Oregon." "I am going there," says the man, "but I have not gone." Yes, he is going ; but he is in New England yet ; and when he has traveled another day he will

be there still. He may stop in New York a week; but he is on his way to Oregon. When he is out of New York State and in the Western States he may wish to stop and see things there and make inquiries, but he is on his way to Oregon. He has begun his journey, although the comprehensive object for which he set out is not attained but is yet in a far distant land.

A man says, "I have been living a wicked life, without regard to the future, and now I am going to take a larger conception of manhood, to live for my Saviour, for eternity, for my own welfare here and hereafter, and for the honor and elevation of my fellow men." He surveys the matter and forms his purpose, and says, "I will, by the grace of God, undertake to live from this time forth by a higher rule and in a better way." *That man is converted.* How much is he converted? Well, he has started in the right way. But every subsequent day of his life he will find out that it is one thing to resolve, that it is another thing to execute, and that on entering upon a Christian life a man enters, not upon a course which by the omnipotent power of God has been shaved smooth and clean so that he rolls like a ball downhill easily all the time, but upon an education the most comprehensive and the most difficult that a man can conceive of.

When you have entered upon a Christian life you have undertaken, under all manner of circumstances and with every influence operating upon you, to take the forces of nature which are working incorrectly in you, and to take your understanding and moral sentiments and spiritual dispositions, and overrule them and control them so that you shall fulfill the great law of love to God and man.

Now, when a man begins such a work as that, he is like a boy that has gone to school. We are not further along, most of us, than such a one. The exceptions I shall have occasion to mention in a moment. The popular idea of a Christian is, that before he was a Christian he was a sinner—in other words, that he was a bag full of all sorts of weed-seeds, and that the Spirit of God came along and shook them up and emptied them out, and put the bag under a hopper, and

filled it full of wheat, and tied it up, and set it in the church, where people point at it and say, "He is a Christian. He used to be a sinner full of vile seeds from bottom to top, but now he is all wheat." Men speak of persons in the church according to that false theory. They think that God has burned up all the chaff and straw, all that is inferior in them, and that they are filled with the Divine Spirit. Instead of that, Christ says to a man, "Would you be saved? Well, come after me, and let me teach you." That is the import of "Follow me" and "Become my disciple." *Disciple* simply means *scholar*. Christ is a school-master to us. We must learn in his kingdom divine ideas, and then we must practice them. We must be not only taught, but *trained* and *drilled*, in Christ's teaching, until it has become a part of our nature.

No man who is beginning to be a Christian is more than a beginner, or can be, in the very nature of the human mind; and when a man is converted—that is to say, when he has had a clear revelation of the enormity of sin, and he revolts from it, and turns away from it, and has a more or less vivid conception of the higher Christian life, and sets his face toward it, saying, "I believe that I am converted, and that I have entered into the kingdom of Christ"—he is like a little child, and has everthing to learn.

I make these explanations for a variety of reasons. First, many persons think, when they are converted, that they are perfect Christians. When a man has gone through conviction, and had an awful time, and wrestled with the Prince of Darkness, and he gets up in meeting, and says, "I remember that I could not eat my meals, that I tossed in bed two whole nights without sleep, and that when I knelt in prayer all seemed dark, till by and by I heard a voice, and peace came into my soul, and I shouted, 'Glory, glory, glory,'" people feel as though that experience showed that he had been rinsed and cleansed and scoured out, and that all in him that was bad was clean gone; but it is not so.

These dramatic experiences I do not in any way ridicule; but I smite them when they are misinterpreted so as to be mischievous, and I say to persons who, though they have

them, are yet living a low life, "Do you not know that your conduct is inconsistent with your profession? Do you not know that you are constantly breaking your Christian vows? Do you not know that you are considered by those who are acquainted with you as no better than an infidel man, and that many who do not pretend to be Christians are regarded as more reliable than you?" They say: "Oh! well, you know that Christians sometimes backslide; but I have been converted, and I have the promises, and I am going to get into heaven." They think that from that dramatic experience which they went through when they were first converted, as they supposed, they are sure of being saved.

A man enters college and passes his examination, which is a pretty tough one, and is matriculated. But during term-time he does not study, but has his sprees and frolics, and does not make any preparation for the examination that is coming round; and when he is warned by his teachers and classmates, who say to him, "Look here, my friend, you are getting into trouble by not studying and preparing for the examination," he says, "I'd like to know if I'm not a member of the Freshman class. Haven't I been examined, and haven't I got in? Don't I belong to this college? I may be worse or better in the coming examination, but here I am in it." Yes, and he may be out of it when the examination comes!

"Many shall say unto him, Have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name done many wonderful works; and he shall profess unto them, I never knew you."

Men say, "Don't you know what a time I had when I was convicted and converted?" What does God care for that? The secret purpose of God is to make you *men*, and redeem you from animalism, and from the thrall and narrowness of pride and selfishness, and augment and enrich your nature, and *edify* you,—as the Scripture phrase is, build you up,—into resplendent, heroic manhood; and what boots it, under such circumstances, that you simply began to be a Christian? The question is, have you been built up?

I have seen in New York City, ten or twelve foundations for buildings where the cellar walls were started, and I

have seen those cellar walls stand for six years, to my certain knowledge, without any superstructure built upon them. So I have seen many Christians converted who never got above the cellar walls. Nothing was ever built upon them. They never became perfect men in Christ Jesus.

We are converted, and have entered the kingdom of God, when we have become as little children, and have undertaken to be better men, according to our light and knowledge in every direction ; when we have undertaken to educate ourselves in a better way of thinking, and feeling, and living ; when we have undertaken to build up a better manhood : and it does not make any difference whether we come into the kingdom of God with uproar and a dramatic experience or not. If you are in the school of Christ and are faithful scholars, that is the main thing ; and if you come in with bands playing and flags flying, and you are poor scholars, it will not do you any good that you have been converted and are in the church. You are to become as little children, in order that you may grow in grace. It is the attainment which you have made toward Christian manhood that is to measure your growth and determine the finality of your life and disposition.

But while on the one side I would expose these mistakes that men commit to their detriment, on the other side I make this exposition for the encouragement of thousands and thousands of persons who were instructed by Christian parents all through their childhood, and who have a substantial knowledge of the truth as it is laid down in Christian schemes, and who have strong yearnings and desires to live better, but who feel self-rebuked, and struggle in their minds. There are before me persons who have said, thousands of times, "I do feel as though, if I were only converted, I should like to live a Christian life." There are thousands who have wistfully looked on when father and mother or brothers and sisters have gone to partake of the Lord's Supper and said, "I wish I were worthy and could go ; but I have never been converted. I do not belong to the church, and, therefore, the Lord's Supper is not for me."

Well, if you are standing and waiting for the Spirit of God instantly to catch you up, and strike light and heat through you, so as to transform you at once, then you are waiting upon an error ; but it is possible for any one of you, at any moment, to be a Christian, now, here, before you leave your seat, while you are listening to me.

Suppose there were war again, and I were calling for soldiers, would you not become a soldier the moment you gave your name to me to be enrolled ? Would you not consider yourself a soldier when you had separated from your friends and companions, and gone into the army, and signed your name, or given me leave to sign it for you ? You would not be a soldier in one sense, but in another sense you would be. You would not have received any drill, but nevertheless you would have enlisted.

Now, it is not necessary that a man should be a whole Christian, it is not necessary that he should be educated in all the lore of Christ, in order to be a Christian. The moment he enters upon a Christian life he is like a child that has just entered a school. How does a child become a scholar ? He enters the school as an abecedarian. He is not far along, to be sure ; but he is beginning ; and he is as really a scholar as he would be if he were further advanced in his education.

Suppose a child six years old on returning from school where he had just been received as a pupil should say, "Father, I am a scholar." And the father says, "If you are a scholar I will examine you ;" and he takes down Newton's *Principia* and questions the child upon it. The father would show himself to be a fool in his idea of what constitutes a scholar. It is not to be supposed that a child in school would have that familiarity with an encyclopedia which belongs to the higher stages of development.

How much knowledge is it necessary that a man should have in order to begin to be a Christian ? How much knowledge must a man have in order to begin to pray ? He need not have any. The desire to pray is sufficient. That makes you like a little child. That was what you needed, and you have found it out ; and the way to practice a Christian vir-

tue is the way to show how very little you know. Let a man begin at any point in the Christian life with this thought: "I honestly mean to live according to the Christian pattern, the rule and law of Christ." What shall he do first? I do not care what he does first. Christ says, "If you give a cup of water in my name to a disciple, you shall not lose your reward." He says, "The kingdom of God is like a seed." What is a seed? It is an oak-tree in embryo. How much of an oak-tree is it? It is an acorn. This is planted; it is hidden. The first year it sprouts; and the second year it rises a little above the ground; but you will have to wait ten or fifteen or twenty years before it will give much shade; and it will be a hundred years before it becomes an acre-spreading tree.

Now, the kingdom of God in the soul of a man, according to the declaration of Christ, being like a seed, begins at the seminal form. It is a germ which grows. When one wishes to become a Christian man, and begins to act upon that wish, he is at most a seed, a germ, which must grow. You cannot, therefore, accept any doctrine of grace which says that by the Divine Spirit you shall be endowed with Christian excellences miraculously. You must begin at the bottom, and learn thing by thing, thing by thing, all the way through.

I am asked, "Suppose now, Mr. Beecher, one should come to you, in Brooklyn, on communion day, early in October, and say, 'I have been thinking of my past life, and I am not satisfied with it: my mind runs in too low a channel; my ideals are ignoble, base, worldly, and I have but an imperfect knowledge of the law of God, though so far as I can see it requires right living, and I am determined to attain it—may I partake of the Lord's Supper?'" I would say to him, "Yes, you may. Not that it is going to do you any miraculous good, but that it will produce an impression on your intellect and imagination." "May I join your church?" "Yes, if I have evidence that you are intelligent enough to know what you are doing, and if I perceive that you are determined, according to the best of your ability, to live a Christian life, and that you have begun it. Under such cir-

cumstances I will take you into my church as a child is taken into an academy." Is it asked, whether I require an examination? Yes, I do. I say to one applying for admission to a school, "If you do not know enough to enter the academy, you had better go into the primary school;" and I take him in, not because he is a perfect scholar, but because he wants to learn. And to a person applying for admission to the church, I open the door, and say, "Do you want to live a more manly life? Are you willing and determined to pattern your life on the ideal manhood as set forth by Christ Jesus?" If he gives affirmative answers to these questions, I say, "You had better come into the church, because the church is a place where we take men who are desirous of doing these things, and where they do them in little before they can do them in large."

If there is a person here who is discontented with his way of living, and wishes he could live a higher life, and can say, "I accept the ideal which is laid down in the Gospel, and will try to do better, taking Christ as my pattern," I regard him as a Christian—a Christian child. He is converted, and has become as a little child, and is ready to be further instructed.

Well, but, is not that a very loose and careless statement? Will not many unworthy persons say, "I have some virtues; I have enough stock to get into the church with." Will not people take advantage, and get into the church, and be satisfied with a superficial life, and undervalue the necessity of a deep moral subsoiling? I have no doubt that there may be such cases; but, on the other hand, in trying to keep them out, the view of the kingdom of God by which it is attempted to keep them out will also keep out many timid, sincere, sensitive persons. By such a course twenty will be hurt or hindered who ought to be in the church, where one is kept out who ought not to be there. I say, therefore, to the many young men and maidens here, You have a knowledge of what is expected of you; and if, having that knowledge, you have an impulse in the right direction, that is sufficient. Sufficient for what? Sufficient for *a leaven*, to begin with: not enough to end with (that comes by educa-

tion), but enough to begin with. It is not only your duty, standing with the light of truth shining down upon you, to accept it and live in accordance with it ; but it is your privilege to take your ground on that, and say, “I am willing to become a scholar, in order that I may become a full-grown man.” And the mystery being all gone, why do not you begin to educate yourself ?

Let me say, further, that many persons, as soon as they have gone into the church, are apt to feel as a person does who has insured his house. It may be burnt up, but it is insured, and he has a sense of security.

A man, going to Europe, may be sea-sick, and may not enjoy his voyage ; but he says, “What matters it that I am miserable on the way ? I shall soon be landed there, and then I shall feel all right.” So, many persons regard the church as a life-boat designed to get men safely off from this world into heaven ; and when they are in the church they feel safe. They say, “I may be a little poorer, I may be a little worse off than others in a worldly point of view ; but being in the church I am secure, and shall go to heaven. My passage is all paid, my insurance is taken out, and nothing can interfere with my safety.”

It is no such thing. The church is nothing in the world but simply an educating institution. A man may go to college and be a blockhead still. A man may enter upon a trade and be a bungler all his life. A man may go into the church and be coarse, and hard, and selfish, and proud, and vain, and not have at all the education that is adapted to a Christian life, or that it was intended to give him in the church.

Therefore, when a man goes into the church he goes there as a scholar goes into a school, or as an apprentice goes into a shop. He goes in for practice ; he goes in to be taught ; he goes in to learn a higher mode of life ; and if we could get out of men’s minds the idea that a sanctity comes from adhesion to the church, as if it were an equivalent for personal endeavor, for study, for labor, for conscientious responsibility, for yearning aspiration, for pressing forward, it would save them from much misconception, and from many

mistakes. It is equivalent to nothing of the sort. It is a help toward these things. You may be better for being in the church, and you may be worse: if it helps you you are better, and if it hinders you you are worse.

A man is converted. He goes into the church, and joins himself to those who believe they are converted, and who are making a common endeavor to live aright. He says, after a week or ten days, "Look here, Parson, I guess you had better take my name off from that roll." "What is the matter?" says the parson. "Well, on such a night Jim and I quarreled, and I knocked him down, and I could not control my temper. There is no grace in my heart, or I never would have done that, although I do mean to live better. You had better take my name off." He is the very man that needs to be in the church.

Suppose, for instance, a man should say to a hotel keeper, in a terrific storm, at night, when the snow was blinding everybody, and when the wind was whirling everything about, "Look here! See how I am hurled about by the wind and storm. I'm not going into the hotel because I am not fit." That he is knocked and beat about is the very reason why he should go in.

And the fundamental condition on which you went into the church was that while you were under obligation to restrain your temper and conduct, and put hindrances in the way of your wrong-doing, nevertheless, you did not profess that your temper was completely under control. You went there to have it controlled. It got the better of you once, but that is no reason why you should not stay in the church. You knocked a man down; but the experience connected with that event may have been a good lesson to him, or to you, or to both. You should learn from your mistakes. A man who does not know how to learn from his mistakes turns the best schoolmaster out of his life. We ought to profit from our follies and weaknesses and blunders.

You went into the church and got drunk. Well, you have been sober for six months—a thing which you could not have said during ten years before. The fact that you have improved should be an encouragement to you; and the fact

that you are not wholly reformed is a reason why you should remain among those who can aid you.

"We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak."

We are subject to the same temptations as our fellow men, and we are exhorted by the apostle to shield them and sympathize with them.

A man goes into the church to learn how to live Christianly. He does not say that he is perfect in any point. He is under instruction. He swears. It is not less than wrong. He ought to be ashamed of his swearing. His conscience ought to smite him. He ought to blush at the thought of it. But he ought not to consider all as lost because he has sworn. He should profit from that wickedness. If he deals with it wisely it may be wholesome to him, like tonic bitters to a man who is in a feeble state of health. It is a thing to be condemned, but it is no reason why he should say that he is not a Christian, or why he should not be one.

A man goes into the church. He is in business, and every man about him is actuated by selfishness, and resorts to adroitness, and is seeking his own interest; he is obliged to watch and guard against their avarice; and he says, "I have been sordid, hard, untruthful. There I did not exactly tell the truth. I am afraid I did make a slight misrepresentation there. A pretty fellow I am, pretending to be a Christian, and playing the hypocrite! I have not been sincere nor honest. I have lied; and how can a man who lies and equivocates call himself a Christian?" Well, do not you think there is need of his being one? and do not you think he has a conviction of sin of the right sort?—not that great generic conviction which men have when they measure themselves against God's law in a general way, but that specific conviction which a man has, when he says, "I am temptable in this faculty and in that; and my vanity and pride are leading me into temptation."

If, when you are beginning to find out the reality of your sickness, the doctor is called in, and he asks what your difficulty is, "Oh," you say, "I am a little unwell; I have a slight fever." He gives you a little cream of tartar, has your feet soaked, and directs that you shall be put to bed; but he does

not know much about your case. The true way, when a man goes to his doctor, and represents himself as being sick, is for the doctor to take him one side, and inquire into his symptoms, and trace the disease to the vital organs, to the nerves, or to the muscles, and put his finger on the trouble, that he may know just what to do.

Now, in regard to a man who is attempting to be a Christian, it is a great deal better for him to know specifically where it is that he sins, and what power or passion or weak point it is that stands in his way. The incidental failures of men who are trying to be good are the very points where their convictions are practical, and where they have some validity. Aside from these their convictions are apt to be generic and imaginative, and of little practical force. You cannot, however, if you are proud, learn how to be humble in a day. You must not excuse yourself for the sins that you commit through pride, and say, "I am proud, and could not help it;" but if you find that you are proud, if you find that pride is organic in your nature, you are, in admitting its faults, to condemn yourself for them so far as it is in your power to prevent them ; yet you are to recognize that it will require time to entirely correct them. It will take ten years to educate pride so that it shall work with benevolence ; and to so educate it is a part of the business of being a Christian.

The mistake of many professed Christians is that of relying upon what they call their " hope." Many persons say that they are going to heaven because they have a hope. What is a hope ? Suppose a snake should take its last year's skin, which it has cast off, and think it was bigger for that old dry skin ? It would be very much like a Christian who takes what he calls his hope, that was never worth much, and that becomes less and less valuable the older it grows, and rests upon that. Many people talk in meetings about their hope, their hope, their hope,—but their hope is of no consequence if it is merely a thing of the past.

Now, the fact is, you are a scholar ; and the question is, What have you learned ? Are you stronger anywhere than you were ? Are you better anywhere ? Are you gaining, on the whole ? Do you feel as though being a Christian was a

business all over, outside and inside, touching life everywhere, so that you must needs, day by day, be lifted up and empowered by the help of God? If so, you are leading a true Christian life. If you can get help from the church, do so—the church was made to give help to such as you; but if you cannot get help from the church you are not obliged to go into the church. The church is not obligatory any more than Fulton Ferry is. I can refuse to cross the river on the ferry-boat, and say, "I won't pay the cent, or two cents: I am going to swim." I should have a right to swim if I preferred; but I should be a fool if I did. And if you say, "I do not want to join the church," you are under no obligation to join it. It was meant for your convenience and assistance; but if you think you can get along without it you are at perfect liberty to dispense with it. There is no obligation on any man to accept it. It is an overture of mercy, and not an overture of obligation, and is he wise who refuses it?

So, then, the kingdom of God consists in the actual existence of a superior manhood in men. Entering the kingdom of God is the beginning of education toward that superior manhood. No man can have the results of this education given to him at once. No man can overcome the tendencies that are in him immediately. It is not the office of the Divine Spirit to change a man from an imperfect to a perfect being by a direct command; it is the office of the Divine Spirit to *work* in a man to will and to do of the good pleasure of God, from day to day, leading him more and more into a perfect, completed manhood.

To be a Christian means to live right; to act according to the highest ideal of rectitude; to learn how, more and more, to carry one's self in obedience to the divine law; and he who does that may have great joy (that is a matter of temperament), or great sorrow (that also is a matter of temperament). He may have great struggles, partly because he does not understand himself, and partly because he does not understand those by whom he is surrounded; but he may be a Christian notwithstanding. And the evidence of this is not whether he is in the church or out of the church. The

true evidence is a growth toward a nobler way of living, in thought and feeling—that is to be a man in Christ Jesus; and he that is trying to grow in that direction has a right to say, “If I persevere I shall by the grace of God be saved. I am not to be saved because I am so good, nor because I have attained so much. God’s love saves me; but I must be salvable; I must be in a condition in which I can be saved; and I am passing more and more into that condition from day to day, and I hope at last to attain the blessedness of the heavenly rest.”

Under these circumstances I wish to say to parents who are bringing up their children, that much of this work which is usually deferred until adult life may be accomplished in childhood. I think that children may often be brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord at an earlier age than it is commonly supposed that they can. But all children do not require the same training, and the results of training are not the same in all children. It is said, “If you bring up your children right when they are young, they will not depart from their right bringing up when they are old.” That is true as a general rule, but suppose you take a child that has a bad father and a bad mother, whose fathers and mothers were also bad; suppose you take a child that has inherited through several generations accumulating tendencies toward the flesh and to evil? It is a very different thing to bring up that child right, from what it is to bring up a child right, whose parents were good people, and who has always been under the best moral influences.

You have the greatest difficulty in bringing your children up right, and the man over the way has no trouble with his. On the one hand he says, “I never used a whip on any of my children, and I never had more than once or twice to rebuke this girl. None of them are vicious, and all of them have respect for and are obedient to the law.” On the other hand you say, “I try to bring up my children as his are brought up; but they are selfish, and jealous, and quarrelsome, and troublesome in every way, and I cannot do anything with them. I do not see why his grow up so well-behaved and mine do not.” It is because your children are

not his. Suppose a man that had wolves' cubs to bring up, should compare himself with another man that had lambs to bring up? It is one thing to bring up lambs, and another thing to bring up wolves' cubs.

Our children are of all sorts. If, however, they are taught from their earliest childhood their relation to God, to the other life, and to the nobilities of this life, and if they are *trained* as they are taught, it will be comparatively easy to bring them up right. But it will always be harder to bring up some children than others, because some are by their organic structure further away from God than others. You can bring all up so that the world will be better than if they had not been trained; but some can bring up their children with more ease than others.

Why should there be that difference? Ask God. I do not know. That is the way it works, and no man can tell why. The question for every man to ask is, "What is *my* duty? What is *my* privilege? What is *my* opportunity?" If God has given you children that are hard to bring up, it is your life business to bring them up, and you must accept it.

If your children are easy to bring up, you need not fret lest they will be mere moralists. Many people are concerned because their children are sweet, loving, and compliant, so that they cannot get an awful experience out of them. It is as if the bass viol should mourn because it cannot do what the flute does. It is as if the bass should complain because it is not like the tenor; the tenor because it is not like the alto; and the alto because it is not like the soprano. There is a difference between wind and stringed instruments, and there is a difference between the various parts of music; and there is just as much difference in human life between individuals.

Your children are susceptible of different degrees of education. They begin at different points in relation to moral perfection—some far away, and some much nearer; and that according to the great principle of heredity, as shown in the Old Testament. Every one must take his children where he finds them, and bring them up as best he can.

The point that I wish to make is this: that a child that

is brought up to seek truth and honesty and obedience, and that as he grows up to man's estate has these things presented to him, will find it easier to pass into the next higher stage of positive choice—of voluntary obedience, not to parents, but to God—than if he had not been rightly instructed. He will find it a world easier to enter upon a self-chosen life of higher consecration than if he had not been well brought up. If you say of a child that has been brought up well that he must be converted, I say that the transition in his case will be almost insensible and invisible, and that his instruction is right in analogy and runs parallel with adult life. It is a process by which he learns how to avoid evil and how to do good.

There are some who have always taught us that conversion is the work of the Holy Spirit, that without the Holy Spirit it is all an illusion, and that any other view tends to produce a sense of self-righteousness. I believe that as much as ever ; but this also I believe : that when the Spirit of God acts, it acts according to the divine injunction,

*"Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in you to will and to do of his good pleasure."*

O Sun ! bring me out violets and daisies from yonder sand-bank. For hundreds of years the sun has been shining on the desert sands of Sahara, and never has it produced a flower there ; but in the meadow over against the house where my father brought me up, every year there were in the early spring an abundance of wild flowers. What is the difference between the shining of the sun on a sand heap and on loam ? The loam is full of organic forms—full of seeds ; and when the sun shines upon it, these seeds sprout and grow, and flowers, grass, etc., are the result ; whereas, the sand is destitute of such organic forms, so that when the sun shines upon it no vegetation is the result. Where the soil is favorable, the sun's shining causes the plant to put forth a stem and throw down roots. Does it create those roots and that stem ? No, it merely gives the stimulus which is necessary to their development. The preexisting conditions are such that the stimulus which the sun gives is all that is needed to secure growth.

Now, in order to use the brain,—all the faculties, the reason, the affections, and the moral sentiments,—what we need is the stimulus of the divine Spirit. Then we use them according to great natural laws. God does not use them for us. He shines on us, and we use them. We are *workers together with God*, he giving the great generic stimulus by which our faculties develop, according to natural laws, the results which are required of us.

It takes nothing from the glory of God to have the world act as he made it to act, or to have mankind develop as he meant they should develop; and it is a hindrance to teach men to *wait* for that elapse of divine stimulus which is *every day* given to each one, and which needs only to be accepted to be enjoyed. If it is accepted in small things, it develops itself more and more, shining brighter and brighter unto the perfect day.

So then, my mission to you this morning is ended. My discourse is delivered, the drift of which is, that every man must needs be born at zero, and go up the scale; that every man must needs begin at the lowest point and develop upward and come to himself at the farther end of life. Nature does not lie at the point where men begin: it lies at the point where, with the best education, they end. It lies in that which we are capable of coming to—not in that primitive condition from which we came. My nature is not behind me: it is before me. It is what I can unfold into. That is my true self. Every living creature is competent to become better, wiser, stronger, nobler than he has been. It is for every one of you to enter that higher life, the kingdom of God; and you are to enter it not self-sufficient. If you enter the church, you are to enter it as little children, saying, "I need help, succor, inspiration." You are to enter it, if at all, that you may live better here and hereafter.

May God give you grace, every one of you, not to throw away even occasional good thoughts. They may not be sufficient to make up a perfect character; but they are sufficient to help you, and to enable you to help others. Do not despise the least things that tend or point in the right direction. If you but feel an impulse to live better in your neighbor-

hood and to do something for those around about you, by improving the road, by repairing the sidewalk, by being public-spirited generally, cherish that impulse; strive to benefit your fellow-men. Be generous. Do not retail current slanders in the community. Study the things which make for peace. Have more pity for those who suffer. If the impulse of prayer comes to you; if your darlings are carried to the grave, or your wealth or honor is fading from you, and your whole soul is lifted up toward something you know not what, do not throw away this experience. There is nothing that lifts you from animalism and above this wicked world that you can afford to put your foot upon. If you wisely heed such things and augment them, they will lead you to those higher experiences out of which you shall see God.

Dearly beloved, we shall not meet again in the flesh. We go our several ways. May the dear love of Christ go with you all. You are beloved of Christ. My Father is your Father. My hope for heaven is your hope for heaven. In sickness, in discouragements, in disappointments, in sins, or in guilt, never give up hope in God. There is no other friend like him. Nobody loves you as he does. You do not know how to love and nourish your children with the tenderness and kindness with which God loves and nourishes you. You are rich as long as you have God. You are poor without him. And wherever you may go, my last words to you, who may never meet me again, are, *Hope in God*. Your hope, your salvation, is in him. *Hope in God!*

## PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

DRIVE away from before us, our Father, all clouds and darkness. Remember our ignorance and our weakness, and help us to lift up our thoughts in their better nature, and our feelings in their best estate, that we may bring to thee that with which thou art well pleased—our love and our gratitude. We rejoice that thou art made known to us through the household; and that those names which are dearest to us and most full of meaning, and that have never died out in all our memory, are the names of God. Thou art, blessed One, Father of every soul, whether he knows it or not. There is none that may not look up and say, Our Father. We rejoice that thou dost deal with us in affection, whether thou dost smile or dost frown; for whom thou lovest thou chastenest, and scourgest every son whom thou receivest. Thy chastisement is for our good, that we may be partakers of thy nature.

We pray that we may have faith to believe in the inheritance of the future. May we have confidence that our life is moving toward a land which is transcendent in all excellence, in plenitude of power, where, when we drop these mortal bodies we shall come forth into glorious realities which but faintly appear in this life. Grant that we may feel that we are living toward summer. As they that are in the far north, and wait in the darkness of winter, and rejoice to see its coming, when the sun shall again rise upon their horizon with light; so may we, wintered in time, look perpetually to death as sunrise; and may our departure hence be our emergence in the land of light. For what are we here, poorly instructed, full of prejudice, with mistake upon mistake, and sin upon sin, buffeted and tossed about hither and thither, by circumstances which are stronger than our will, often bent and biased? Behold, in our earthly estate, how imperfect we are, and how much of that which is at all good we owe, not to ourselves, not to the power of goodness in us, but to the influences which surround us in thy providence, and in the whole framework of life in society.

We beseech of thee, O Lord our God, since we are weak in all that is good, since we are so strong earthward, and so feeble heavenward, that thou wilt adjust thine administration over us according to our weakness and necessity through time. In the family the babes are most to us because they need most; and we should be most to thee if thou art our Father, because we are poor, and weak, and needy, and afar off. And this is the relation of God in Christ Jesus, blessed be thy name, that thou art a God of grace, capable of suffering for those that need some one to suffer for them; that thou art one that knows how to bear our burdens, and to carry our sorrows, and to make us better by receiving upon thine own self, in thy care and sympathy, and in thy nature, our troubles. Thou dost think, and wait, and labor, and mould, working in us to will and to do of thy good pleasure. We rejoice in this interpretation of a God adapted to the wants of men in this nascent state, just coming to intelligence, or just reaching forth out of intelligence into grace and moral beauty. We need longsuffering; we need infinite instruction; we need forgive-

ness and great compassion; and this thou art. Like as a father pitieth his children the Lord pitieh them that fear him. He knoweth our frame and remembereth that we are dust.

We bless thee, O God of all light, that thou art also the God of all comfort. Thou art infinitely perfect. We cannot ascend to the conception of such royalty as is in thee. We are afar off, seeing dimly, and feeling but intimations of what thou art, and of what thy glory is.

O Lord our God, we rejoice that thou wilt overflow and fill up every imperfect conception, and that thou wilt be infinitely better than any goodness that we ever thought of; infinitely more tender than any tenderness that we have ever known; infinitely more faithful than any fidelity that we have ever seen; infinitely more royal than any royalty that the earth has ever witnessed. How great is thy power and how great is thy wisdom must needs appear from the world that is without; but that which is thy power and thy wisdom, that which is thy glory, thy disposition, thy real life, thy pitying care, thy wonderful power of making happy those that are in thy household—who shall tell us of these things? When we come to see thee as thou art, and not as thou hast been framed to us as one that dwells in the external world; when we have dropped earth-born terms, and we behold thee in thine innermost being, all heaven will not contain thy glory. Then, all that are present, and we among them, must needs break forth into transports of gladness, and sing that new song which ascribes honor, and power, and glory unto thee. And still, and forever more, thou wilt lead us on, loving and beloved. More and more thou wilt develop the soul that is with thee, and prepare it for higher duties, for more glorious labors. We are sons of God, but it doth not yet appear what we shall be. We know not the meaning of it. When our coronation comes, what the robe shall be, or the sceptre, or the harp, or the joy, or the employment, or the ways of life, we know not; but we know that thou wilt be exceeding abundantly more than we can conceive of here. It hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive of the glories that thou hast laid up for those who love thee.

We pray that we may have faith in these things even as those in winter have faith that the summer will come; or as those in the midst of storms know that sunshine will return. May we believe that the future is full of refinement, and intelligence, and purity, and fidelity, and all imaginable experiences of gladness and peace which are not permitted to earth, and which men cannot receive here. In faith and in hope of the blessedness which is beyond may we be willing to bear the cross, and take upon ourselves burdens, and cares, and sorrows which scour our pride. May we be willing to be disciplined now, that by and by we may be lifted up into thine ethereal presence.

May we rejoice in that providence of God which knows all our wants and administers to all our necessities. Be pleased, we beseech of thee, to bless all who are in thy presence according to their circumstances. Grant thy blessing to those who are advanced in life, and drawing near to the overlooking mountain, and beholding afar

off the promised land. May they, unlike thy servant of old, feel that their footsteps are going down to the Jordan, and that they shall pass over and behold the beauteous light of promise; and may the shining of the coming glory irradiate their faces before they pass out of our sight.

Look with compassion, we pray thee, upon those who are bearing the burdens of life. May they strive to serve thee in their daily duties, and endeavor in all things to be more and more conformed to the pattern of Jesus Christ. We pray that they may be diligent in business, and fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. May they resist temptations to sordidness, and selfishness, and pride, and all things that are unlovely. May they fight the good fight in the midst of their daily avocations, and so become more like God.

We pray that those who are advancing into the midst of the fierce experiences of mature life may find themselves confirmed in virtue, growing more and more steadfast, holding fast to their ideals of purity, and integrity, and truth, and justice. Let them never be ashamed of the heartswells and exultations which come from faith and hope, and the prospect of nobler living. And we pray that as they meet the storms and trials of life they may be as good soldiers who go forth amidst rejoicings and bannered display to the field of actual warfare, where with hardship and ten thousand forms of aggravated suffering they still maintain patriotism and manhood.

And may the young that go forth into the battle of life remember that thus they are to be made warriors and heroes. Wilt thou give them integrity and faith. May they believe in truth, in fidelity, in heroism, in the spirit land, in the presence of God, in the loving angels that surround them, in all things that are full of brightness, and hope, and promise. May they never become selfish. May they never cast themselves into the slough of worldliness. May they never be content with the husks that the swine eat. May the divine Spirit guide them in all their ways. May they have longings for things high and noble. May their lives not be disfigured by things low and gross. May they rise above temptations, and pursue the right ways. We pray that all their joys and hopes, all their sorrows and sadnesses, may be sanctified by the Spirit of God to prepare them for better living here and nobler triumphs hereafter.

Accept the thanksgiving of those who, this morning, desire to draw near with thank-offerings. How many instances come up before the minds of thy servants of thy sparing mercies, and of deliverances from impending dangers! How many parents think of their children dead, and are grateful to thee for thy kindness to them in the most trying exigencies of their life! And we pray, if any come looking back upon children gone from them, or scattered throughout the world, that thou wilt sanctify to them their memory and their affection for them. If there are those whose children are about them, whom they are teaching, and on whose account they are often in great sorrow, and disappointment, and surprise, wilt thou grant that they may yet be steadfast, full of faith, and hold fast to the promises of God, and never despair. We pray, if there be those who are but beginning to present their children to the Lord,

and who enter upon life with them, that they may feel this day the blessing of God resting upon them; and may their children become dearer to them because they are dear to God; and may they see upon their faces, not alone the light of earthly sweetness, but also the light of coming glory; and may they put more and more holy thoughts into the rearing of their offspring, and set them against the background of the eternal world so that they may shine upon them as stars shine from the other side; and may their children be brought up in all love, and with a nobler sense of rectitude than that with which they themselves were brought up.

We pray that thou wilt sanctify all our affections. May all our ways be directed in the light of that great undiscovered realm of the soul for which there is no language, where so much of our life passes, but where we have no communion and no fellowship. Sanctify the experiences of our life. Sanctify our silent sufferings. Sanctify all our aspirations, and hopes, and longings, and sorrows that come rolling, we know not how nor from whence, by celestial influences. Prepare us thus by joy and by sorrow, and measure thou both of them to us. Send us such schoolmasters as thou dost please, to make us better and better through our weakness and through our strength, until we are ripe; and then may the sickle flash and the reaper come, and may we go home with harvest songs sounding in our ears, garnered into the eternal heritage of our God.

Aud to the Father, the Son, and the Spirit shall be praises evermore. *Amen.*



#### PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

THOU best and most beloved in heaven, thou Father of all goodness and God of all grace and consolation, breathe upon the souls in this presence to make them discontented with themselves, discontented with their shortcomings, with their imperfections, with all that is wrong. Breathe hope into their hearts, that they may every one feel, in spite of all the past and its besetments, that there is for them a better life and a nobler manhood; breathe a spirit of tenderness into all that they may live together affianced in nobler friendship. We pray for the blessing of Almighty God upon every soul, upon all those that are dear to each one of us, upon all our households and all the consecrated hopes therein. We pray for our beloved land, and for all the nations of the earth. O Lord, how long? Behold the roaring misery of the world that groans and travails in pain; behold the fightings, the bloodshed, the terrible disasters and the speechless sufferings; behold around the globe how few know thee and how many are besotted. How long, O Lord, how long? Bring in the bright day when no man shall need to say to his neighbor, Know thou the Lord, but when every man shall know him from the greatest to the least. Cut short the time, make haste, thou that dwellest in the infinitude of strength, and bring to pass the latter-day glory when the new heaven and the new earth shall come in which dwelleth righteousness. And to thy name shall be the praise, forever and forever. *Amen.*

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